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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/RA AND G/TIP

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SUBJECT: 2009 TIP INTERIM ASSESSMENT FOR UAE

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11. (SBU) Post presents the following update in response to reftel request for a summary of UAEG progress on selected anti-trafficking issues.

12. (SBU) In October, the Dubai Attorney General announced the creation of a permanent task force to handle human trafficking cases. The task force is a centralized anti-trafficking unit that will investigate and prosecute TIP cases, as well as identify and support victims. To that end, the task force will include social workers and mental health professionals, in addition to female investigators assigned to cases involving female victims. As of mid-October, Dubai authorities had brought 17 human trafficking cases to court in 2009. At least twice, Dubai prosecutors filed human trafficking charges in sexual assault cases where it was alleged the perpetrators sought to force the victims into prostitution. In August, Dubai criminal courts handed down five-year prison sentences to three individuals convicted of trafficking for prostitution a woman who was held captive for one day. Two convicted traffickers in another case received life sentences.

13. (SBU) There are two primary shelters, one in Abu Dhabi and one in Dubai, for trafficking victims. They operate under the Red Crescent Authority, which is considering an expansion of services, possibly to include a new facility in Sharjah. On November 8, "Mother of the Nation" Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak toured the Abu Dhabi shelter and donated one million dirham (approximately \$272,500 USD) to support its operations.

14. (SBU) The UAEG now has bilateral agreements with eight labor exporting countries: India, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, China, and Thailand. The agreements vary in content but share the intent of involving government labor ministries in the contracting of laborers as a means of undermining illegitimate private recruiting agencies. At least four source countries now have a minimum wage standard that must be incorporated into legal contracts involving their nationals working in the UAE.

15. (SBU) Anti-trafficking experts from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) visited the country earlier this year to train law enforcement officials and NGO representatives in identifying trafficked persons and traffickers and in techniques for interviewing potential victims.

16. (SBU) One other significant development is the government-mandated electronic wage deposit system for foreign laborers intended to prevent abuse of the sponsorship system by establishing a record of direct salary payments. An estimated 500,000 workers will be covered by the end of 2009, and four million by the UAEG's May 2010 implementation deadline.

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